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Readings in Social Problems. By ALBERT BENEDICT WOLFE.
(Boston: Ginn and Company. Pp. xiii, 804. 1916.
\$2.80.)

In determining the field to be covered by a compilation of writings on social problems, Professor Wolfe has done wisely to make the question of population his central theme. While the economic activities of society are often truthfully referred to as basic, yet there is no department of the social organization which touches so intimately and intricately practically all human relationships as that which includes the growth, size, and make-up of the population; even the economic organization itself is largely determined by the density of population. If the sociological training of young people for active and useful life in society were restricted to the mastery of one single topic, that topic should emphatically be the laws of population. A book dealing broadly and authoritatively with this subject has therefore abundant *raison d'être*. For the rest, its success and usefulness depend largely upon the judgment with which the selections are chosen.

Professor Wolfe gives evidence of wide knowledge of the literature and of careful discrimination in his choice of the selections which he has brought together. He has avoided the two undesirable extremes, on the one hand of choosing startling and novel but erratic and inconclusive discussions, and on the other hand of limiting himself to thoroughly standard and classical writings, which convey general truths already broadly familiar and therefore lacking in inspiration. The topics covered in this book fall under five main heads: *viz.*, Problems of Population, Immigration, The Woman Problem, Marriage and Divorce, and the Negro Problem in the United States. The author believes in the historical approach to modern social problems as the only method of acquiring a sound perspective, and therefore many of his selections are from writers of several generations ago. This comparison of the opinions of widely separated periods with reference to enduring human relationships is decidedly stimulating and suggestive. On the other hand, the passages from contemporary writers set forth some of the latest and most advanced views with reference to live issues. The author displays an admirable impartiality in his selections, concealing very successfully any predilections he may have in one direction or another.

It would be obviously out of place for the reviewer to attempt to criticise the subject-matter of the various chapters. The

writers from whose works Professor Wolfe has made his selections are almost all well-known and recognized authorities in their various spheres; the passages chosen are those in which each voices his special message most succinctly and clearly. There is therefore a fund of diversified and vigorous thinking on social topics, which the reader is free to weigh and evaluate according to his own judgment and standards. The book will be found to be a valuable reference work for those already somewhat familiar with the topics treated, and undoubtedly an excellent educational medium for the student who approaches the subject for the first time.

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NEW BOOKS

ANSTRUTHER, E. H. *The farm servant.* (London: Allen & Unwin. 1916. Pp. 410. 6s.)

ARONOVICI, C. *The social survey.* (Philadelphia: Harper Press. 1916. Pp. 255. \$1.25.)

ATHERTON, S. H. *Survey of wage-earning girls below sixteen years of age in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 1915.* (New York: National Child Labor Committee. 1915. Pp. 65. 25c.)

Largely local in value, this study suggests a type of volunteer service which is needed in every community, to interpret the community to itself. If the allied forces for betterment in each of our industrial centers of moderate size (Wilkes-Barre numbered 67,105 population in 1910) would put to themselves the queries raised by Mrs. Florence Kelley in the preface, and answered in the report, society might be stirred to eliminate some of the dreariness here pictured.

The survey contributes less to knowledge of industrial than of social questions. It helps to roll up data with regard to wages and shifting of employed minors, and the consequences, but it adds no new facts. It does, however, introduce us to social conditions when it tells us that 50 per cent of the families are Roman Catholic in religion; that "of 175 families whose fathers are foreign born," 84 daughters report no other language than English; that one fifth of the group studied (21.9 per cent) left school before they were 14 years of age, or illegally; that as many girls are idle as at work between 14 and 16 years of age (also contrary to law) if one interprets the chart correctly; that 30 per cent of the families represented are below the poverty line (if we may accept \$2 weekly income per capita without rent as the margin of safety).

The schedule is not printed, the tables and graphic material are grouped at the end of the pamphlet; unfortunately the legends are